Shorter Contributions

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THE *OPUNTIA* CACTUS BUG *CHELINIDEA VITTIGER* REDISCOVERED IN VIRGINIA (HETEROPTERA: COREIDAE). — The *Opuntia* Cactus Bug (*Chelinidea vittiger* Uhler) feeds on the Eastern Prickly-pear Cactus (*Opuntia humifusa* (Raf.) Raf.), and ranges from Virginia to Florida, west to Nebraska and the Southwest, and north to southwestern Canada (Herring, 1980). The species is easily recognized by the yellow stripes on the head, the three-sided antennal articles, and its occurrence on prickly pear cacti (Hoffman, 1991). Eastern Prickly-pear Cactus occurs sporadically throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, mostly in dry sandy or rocky, open habitats from coastal dunes to the Appalachian Mountains. Only one species of *Opuntia* is thought to occur in Virginia (Weakley et al., 2012).

Hoffman (1975) stated that "the occurrence of *C. vittiger* in Virginia stands upon very inadequate documentation," presumably based on two factors. First, is the potential for one of the two Virginia records (specimen cited by Uhler, 1863) to have been taken from the Kanawha River valley in what is now West Virginia, prior to its political separation from Virginia. Second, a nymph taken from Herndon, Virginia in 1911, has never been substantiated via surveys in that area, and may have been mislabeled or misidentified (Hoffman, 1994). Due to the rapid development of suburban areas around Washington, DC (including Herndon) during the last 50 years, the coreid seems less likely to occur there. These factors, and a host of negative surveys by himself and others, led Hoffman (1994) to propose that the species "be removed from the list of Virginia coreids."

Over the last 15 years, I have searched unsuccessfully at numerous sites containing *Opuntia* cacti in hopes of finding *C. vittiger*. However, my first nocturnal foray for this species (albeit unintentional) yielded a positive result. On 24 August 2010 while trapping bats at a Scott County cave, a lull in the bat trapping led me to make a brief search of the abundant prickly pear cacti in the surrounding pasture. Eventually, I noticed a slight movement on one of the cactus pads, and then another. With the aid of my head lamp, I collected five adults of a dull yellow and black hemipteran (Fig. 1) from a single cluster of *Opuntia*. I never saw them elsewhere in the pasture despite looking at hundreds of cacti. These specimens were examined further, checked against online resources and field guides, and were later confirmed by Dr. Hoffman to be *C. vittiger*. Finally, this true bug had been restored to the fauna of the Commonwealth!

Fig. 1. Two adults of the *Opuntia* Cactus Bug (*Chelinidea vittiger*) collected on 24 August 2010 from a site in Scott County, Virginia (photo by C. S. Hobson).

It remains to be determined if this species is more nocturnal than diurnal. It might be worthwhile to revisit other sites with *Opuntia* at night to determine if *C. vittiger* can be found more easily with flashlight in hand. Additional surveys are needed to determine the extent and condition of the Scott County population.

The collection site is approximately 2 km (1.2 miles) east of Nickelsville, Scott County, Virginia, and consists of a dry rocky pasture with abundant fescue, thistle, and *Opuntia*. The site has several cave openings and numerous sinkholes. Copper Creek flows along the northern boundary of the site. Voucher specimens are deposited in the Virginia Museum of Natural History, Martinsville, Virginia.

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TWO ROBBER FLIES (DIPTERA: ASILIDAE) NEW TO THE VIRGINIA FAUNA, PLUS NOTES ON ADDITIONAL POORLY KNOWN SPECIES.—In 2010, I published a list of the robber flies of Virginia that included 115 confirmed species plus an additional eleven considered possible for a total of 126 (Bedell, 2010). Since that time, two species, *Orthogonis stygia* and *Leptogaster murina*, have been recorded in Virginia raising the confirmed species to 117 for a total of 128 (neither was on my hypothetical species list). This note also updates data on six additional species that were previously documented by few records, and presents occurrence evidence that *Nicocles pictus* overwinters in the adult stage. I have maintained the same format as the 2010 paper, with species presented in alphabetical order according to subfamily, and with counties italicized.

Asilinae

Neomochtherus auricomus (Hine)

On 5 September 2013, I observed this species to be fairly common (about 20 adults observed in a 2-hour period) in the understory of second growth deciduous woods at Pocahontas State Park, *Chesterfield Co.* Perch sites included leaves of American Holly *(Ilex opaca)*. Specimens and photographs (BugGuide photos #837779-80) were obtained. This species may be underreported due to its appearance late in the season.

Proctacanthus heros (Wiedemann)

This impressive species, the largest of our asilids, was included on the Virginia list based on a specimen taken in 1938. I collected a male on 18 August 2011 and observed several more at Cherry Orchard Bog Natural Area Preserve (NAP) in *Sussex Co.* Later that same day I photographed one at Chub Sandhill NAP (BugGuide photo #593537), also in *Sussex Co.* A. V. Evans collected a female at Blackwater Ecological Preserve in *Isle of Wight Co.* in a Malaise trap run from 23 September to 5 October 2010. This specimen is in my collection.

Brachyrhopalinae

Ceraturgus aurulentus (Fabricius)

I took a female specimen of this apparently very rare species in Pocahontas State Park (*Chesterfield Co.*) on 5 September 2013. Habitat was second growth dry deciduous woods with low understory. In appearance and behavior, it was a very convincing mimic of a yellow jacket wasp (*Vespula* sp.). Even its flight was very unlike any asilid I know, being low to the ground and in curved patterns.

After capturing the initial specimen, I returned to the site three times before observing another and taking photographs of an ovipositing female and habitat on 11 September (BugGuide # 840074-76, 840080). My last observation (one adult) was on 2 October.